

2001

WISCONSIN YOUTH RISK BEHAVIOR SURVEY

Executive Summary

WISCONSIN DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC INSTRUCTION



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of Public Instruction
Madison, Wisconsin

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Executive Summary

The 2001 Wisconsin Youth Risk Behavior Survey (YRBS) is conducted as part of a national effort by the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention to monitor health-risk behaviors of the nation's high school students. The Wisconsin Department of Public Instruction (DPI) and the Department of Health and Family Services (DHFS) both contributed questions to the survey to measure issues of special significance to Wisconsin. This report contains findings from the 2001 Wisconsin YRBS in eight priority areas: protective assets, unintentional injuries, weapons and violence, suicide, tobacco use, alcohol and other drug use, sexual behavior, and diet and exercise. The full report also includes an analysis of the relationship between risk behaviors and protective assets, and provides comparisons of behaviors between demographic groups and over time.

The YRBS was administered to 2120 students in 54 public high schools in Wisconsin in the spring of 2001. The students who participated in the survey are representative of all ninth through twelfth grade public school students in Wisconsin. Due to the small sample size for various demographic groups, the comparisons of responses to questions by race are limited to white and black students only. The 2001 Wisconsin data are compared to the 1993, 1997, and 1999 Wisconsin data and the 1999 National YRBS data to indicate trends and comparisons.

ASSETS

A youth's behavior is influenced by a complexity of experiences and influences. The Search Institute in Minneapolis, Minnesota, describes the positive influences that shape behavior as assets. These assets can protect youth from risk behaviors as well as promote healthy behaviors.

Wisconsin Highlights

Students reported generally high levels of assets in social support, expectations, positive values, and social competencies.

Total Assets (range from 1 to 14):

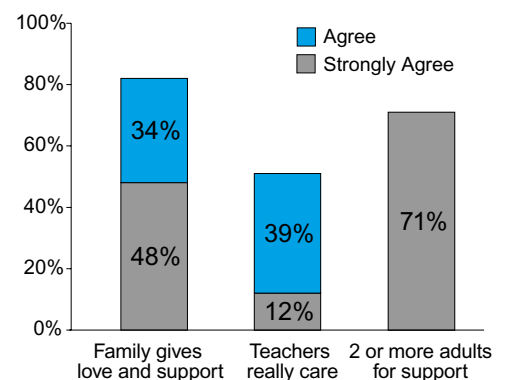
Students averaged 9.7 assets overall.

The protective power of assets was demonstrated in the strong negative correlations that existed between assets and drug use, tobacco use, and risky use of vehicles. In addition to protecting youth from negative behaviors, having more assets increases the chances that young people will have positive attitudes and behaviors.

Positive Values

	Males	Females
Try hard at school	67%	81%
Care about others' feelings	79%	93%
Important not to use alcohol and other drugs	50%	52%
Important to help others	51%	73%
Important to delay sex	35%	45%

Social support received from family, teachers, and other adults among Wisconsin public high school students – 2001



UNINTENTIONAL INJURIES

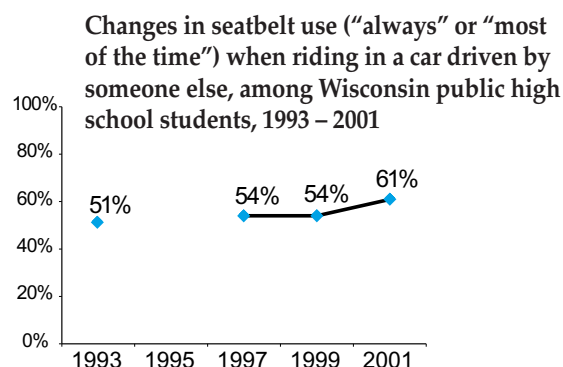
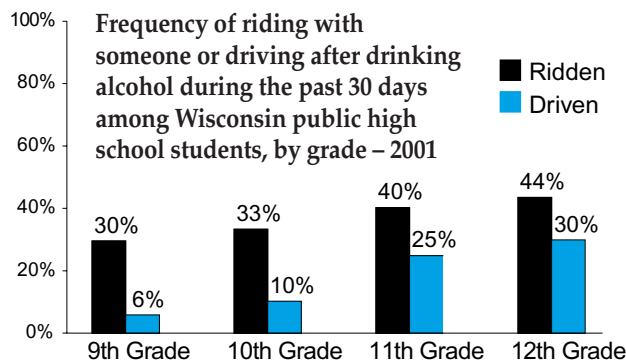
Unintentional injuries are the number one cause of death among Wisconsin residents aged 15 to 24, accounting for 242 deaths (43 percent) in 1999 (Bureau of Health Information, 2001). Nationally, unintentional injuries remain the leading cause of death among children and adolescents ages 5-19. Motor-vehicle crashes resulted in 32 percent of fatalities and all other unintentional injuries contribute 15 percent of all fatalities among this age group (WISQARS, 2001).

Wisconsin Highlights

- Thirty-six percent of students reported riding with a driver who had been drinking alcohol at least once in the past 30 days.
- Thirty percent of high school seniors reported driving after drinking alcohol at least once in the past 30 days.
- Seatbelt use increased from 51 percent in 1993 to 61 percent in 2001.

1999 National YRBS

- Thirty-three percent of students reported riding with a driver who had been drinking alcohol at least once in the 30 days prior to the survey.
- Thirteen percent of students reported driving after drinking alcohol at least once in the 30 days prior to the survey.



WEAPONS & VIOLENCE

From 1999 to 2000, the number of violent offenses by juveniles in Wisconsin declined by 14 percent, from 2,282 in 1999 to 1,956 in 2000. In the United States, homicide is the second leading cause of death among young adults aged 15 to 24, and third for those aged 5-14 years. It is the leading killer of black adolescents and young adults (National Center for Health Statistics, 2001).

Wisconsin Highlights

Student reports of carrying weapons, including guns, both anywhere and on school property in the past 30 days decreased significantly from 1993 to 2001.

- Reports of carrying a weapon anywhere decreased from 19 percent in 1993 to 13 percent in 2001 and reports of carrying a weapon at school decreased from 9 percent in 1993 to 3 percent in 2001.
- Reports of carrying a gun anywhere decreased from 9 percent in 1993 to 5 percent in 2001.

Male students had a significantly higher prevalence rate than female students on nearly every measure of violence and weapon use.

Weapons Carrying Past 30 Days

	Males	Females
Carried a weapon	21%	5%
Carried a gun	8%	1%
Carried a weapon on school property	5%	2%

Black/African American students were significantly more likely than white students to report:

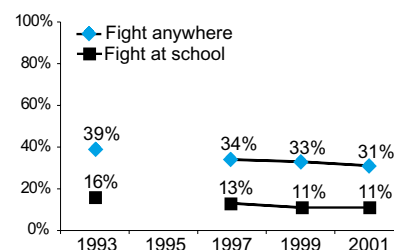
- Being involved in a physical fight in the past 12 months, with 46 percent of black students and 29 percent of white students reporting this behavior.
- Being involved in a physical fight at school in the past 12 months (21 percent of black students report this compared to 10 percent of white students)
- Being threatened or hurt with a weapon at school in the past 12 months (15 percent of black students compared to 7 percent of white students).

The percentage of students who reported being involved in a fight anywhere and on school grounds decreased significantly between 1993 and 2001.

1999 National YRBS

- Seventeen percent of students had carried a weapon on one or more days in the 30 days preceding the survey, and 5 percent had carried a gun.
- Thirty-six percent of students nationwide had been in a physical fight anywhere and 14 percent had been in a fight on school property during the 12 months preceding the survey.

Changes in physical fighting in the past 12 months among Wisconsin public high school students, by location, 1993 – 2001



SUICIDE

Suicide was the second-most common cause of death among 15- to 24-year-olds in Wisconsin in 1999, accounting for 99 deaths (17.6%) (Bureau of Health Information, 2001). Nationally, suicide is the third leading cause of death for persons aged 15 to 24, resulting in 10 percent of the deaths among that age group (National Center for Health Statistics, 2001).

Wisconsin Highlights

- Prevalence of students reporting having seriously considered suicide in the past 12 months has dropped significantly since 1993, from 27 percent of students in 1993 to 20 percent of students in 2001.
- Prevalence of students who have attempted suicide in the past 12 months has remained relatively steady, near 9 percent of all students.

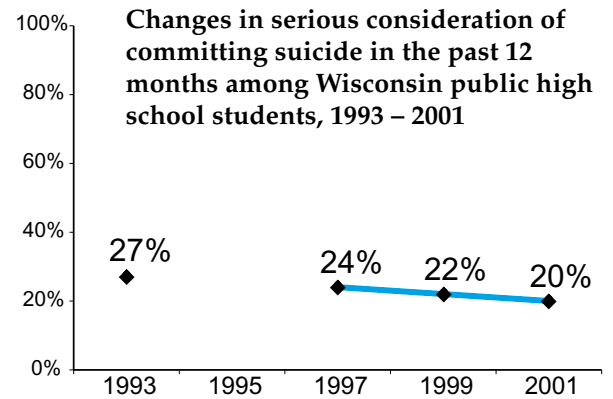
1999 National YRBS

The prevalence of suicidal behaviors among Wisconsin students mirrored national prevalence rates.

- Nineteen percent of students seriously considered suicide, and 8 percent of students attempted suicide in the 12 months prior to the survey.

Female students were significantly more likely than male students to report feeling sad or hopeless and to consider and attempt suicide.

	Males	Females
Feeling sad or hopeless	18%	36%
Considered suicide	15%	25%
Attempted suicide	6%	11%



TOBACCO

Tobacco use remains the single most important preventable cause of death in the United States, causing more than 400,000 deaths each year (CDC). Approximately 80 percent of adult smokers started smoking before the age of 18 (CDC).

For the first time in the history of the Wisconsin YRBS, female students were significantly more likely than male students to be current smokers and to report ever smoking daily.

	Males	Females
Ever smoked a whole cigarette	51%	56%
Smoked past 30 days	29%	37%
Ever daily smoker	21%	29%
Current smokeless tobacco user	14%	4%
Current cigar smoker	23%	11%

Wisconsin Highlights

- Thirty-three percent of students reported smoking at least one cigarette during the 30 days prior to the survey.
- Prevalence of current smoking among students decreased significantly from 38 percent in 1999 to 33 percent in 2001.

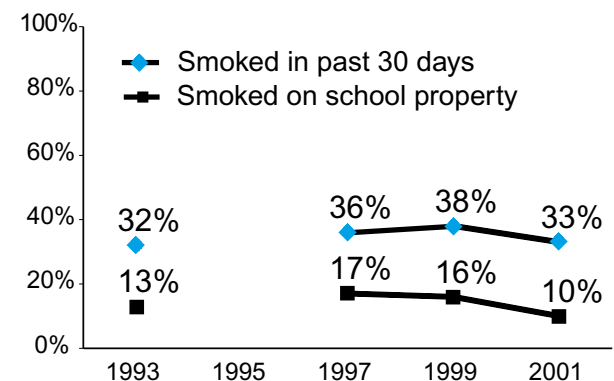
Black/African American students were significantly **less** likely than white students to report:

- Smoking in the past 30 days, with 17 percent of black students and 33 percent of white students reporting this behavior.
- Ever smoked daily, with 15 percent of black students compared to 25 percent of white students reporting this behavior.

1999 National YRBS

- Thirty-five percent of students reported smoking in the 30 days prior to survey.

Changes in smoking behavior among Wisconsin public high school students, 1993 – 2001



ALCOHOL & OTHER DRUGS

Heavy drinking has been linked to multiple sexual partners, use of marijuana, and poor academic performance (Wechsler et al., 1995). Alcohol is also a major contributing factor in approximately half of all homicides, suicides, and motor vehicle crashes (Bureau for Health Information, 1996b). Drug use is related to suicide, early unwanted pregnancy, school failure, delinquency, and transmissions of sexually transmitted diseases (Garrison et al., 1993 and Hawkins et al., 1992).

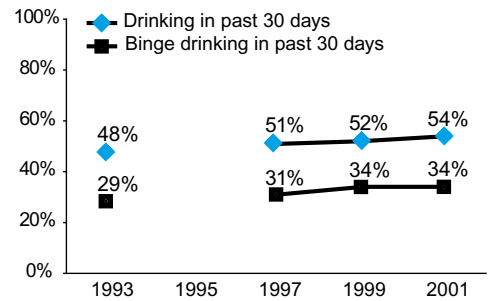
Wisconsin Highlights

- The prevalence of students who reported having at least one alcoholic drink in the 30 days preceding the survey increased significantly from 48 percent in 1993 to 54 percent in 2001.
- The prevalence of students who reported having five or more drinks at one time (binge drinking) in the 30 days preceding the survey increased significantly from 29 percent in 1993 to 34 percent in 2001.
- Male students were significantly more likely than female students to report drinking five or more drinks at a time in the 30 days prior to the survey, with 37 percent of males reporting this behavior compared to 31 percent of females.
- Prevalence of students who reported using marijuana in the past 30 days increased significantly from 11 percent in 1993 to 25 percent in 2001.

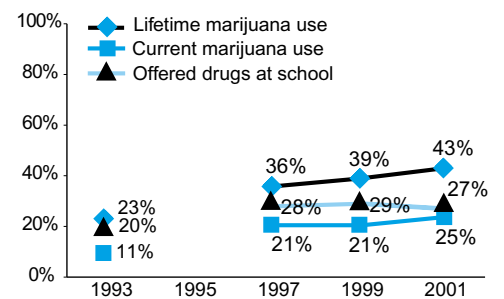
1999 National YRBS

- Thirty-two percent of all students reported binge drinking in the past 30 days.
- Forty-seven percent of students reported having used marijuana during their lifetime.
- Twenty-seven percent of students reported using marijuana one or more times in the past 30 days.

Changes in alcohol use among Wisconsin public high school students, 1993 – 2001



Changes in marijuana use and drug availability among Wisconsin public high school students, 1993 – 2001



SEXUAL BEHAVIOR

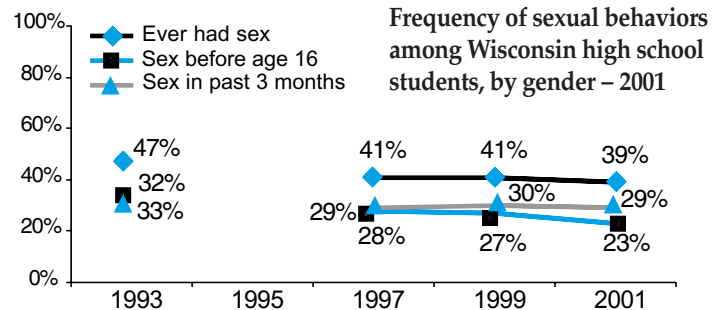
In Wisconsin in 2000, 99 births were to teens under 15 and 2,225 were to mothers 15 to 17 years old. This represents a birth rate of 20 births per 1,000 females under the age of 18, a decrease from the birth rate of 24 births per 1,000 females under the age of 18 in 1995. In addition, youth (ages 15-19) have the highest STD infection rate of any age group in Wisconsin (Wisconsin Department of Health and Family Services).

Wisconsin Highlights

- Thirty-nine percent of students said that it was important for them to delay having sexual intercourse until they were married, engaged, or an adult in a long-term, committed relationship, while 32 percent of students said that it was not important to delay having sexual intercourse.
- The prevalence of students who reported ever having had sexual intercourse decreased significantly from 47 percent in 1993 to 39 percent in 2001.
- Sixty-four percent of the students who reported ever having had sex reported using a condom the last time they had sex.
- Female students were significantly more likely than male students to report ever having sexual intercourse, with 44 percent of female students reporting this behavior compared to 35 percent of male students.

Sexual Behaviors

	Males	Females
Ever had sex	35%	44%
Had sex in past 3 months	25%	33%
Used alcohol or drugs before last sexual intercourse	31%	23%



Black/African American students were significantly more likely than white students to report:

- Ever having sexual intercourse (67 percent of black students compared to 36 percent of white students).
- Having had sex in the past three months, with 52 percent of black students and 27 percent of white students reporting this behavior.
- Having multiple sexual partners in their lifetime, 40 percent of black students report having had three or more sexual partners in their lifetime, compared to 12 percent of white students.

1999 National YRBS

- Fifty percent of all students reported having had sexual intercourse during their lifetime.
- Fifty-eight percent of sexually active students reported using a condom the last time they had sex.

DIET & EXERCISE

Poor eating habits and inactivity are the root causes of overweight and obesity. Obesity among youth has more than doubled in the past 30 years (U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, 1997b). Fourteen percent of adolescents in the United States ages 12 to 19 years are overweight or obese (U.S. DHHS 2001). Most Americans currently do not consume healthy diets according to dietary recommendations. Most diets are high in fats and low in complex carbohydrates and dietary fiber.

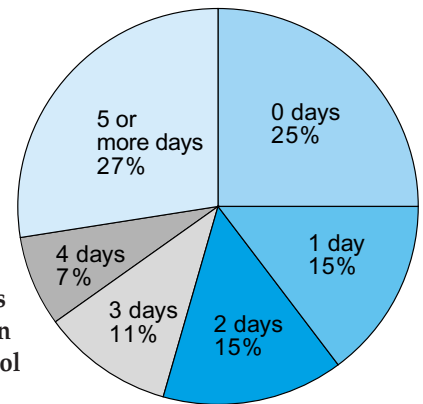
Wisconsin Highlights

- Twenty-five percent of all students are at risk for overweight or overweight according to their Body Mass Index (BMI).
- Sixty-four percent of students reported exercising or participating in vigorous physical activities that made them sweat and breathe hard for at least 20 minutes on three or more of the past seven days.
- Twelve percent of students reported eating five or more servings of fruits and vegetables on the day prior to the survey.

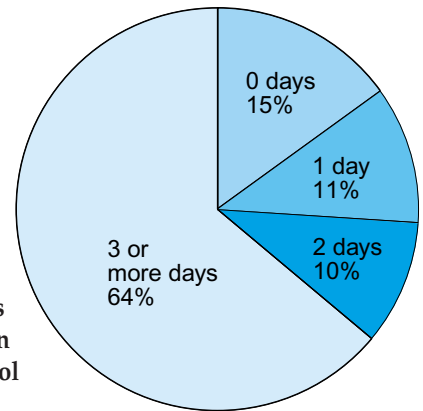
1999 National YRBS

- Sixty-five percent of students reported exercising or participating in vigorous physical activities that made them sweat and breathe hard for at least 20 minutes on three or more of the past seven days.
- Twenty-seven percent of students reported participating in moderate physical activity that did not make them sweat or breathe hard on five or more of the past seven days.

Frequency of moderate physical activity in the past 7 days among Wisconsin public high school students – 2001



Frequency of strenuous physical activity in the past 7 days among Wisconsin public high school students – 2001



Healthy students make better learners

Together we help students become healthy, caring, contributing, and responsible citizens

For more information on the programs and resources provided by the DPI's Student Services, Prevention and Wellness Team, please feel free to contact us at (608) 266-8960.

School communities can implement programs to effectively reduce health risk behaviors and promote assets and school success. These include:

Healthy School Environments — programs, policies, and services that contribute to a warm, nurturing and safe physical environment and school culture that is conducive to student learning.

Curriculum, Instruction, and Assessment — classroom instruction providing the information, skill development and instilling the attitudes that enables students to make decisions to promote or protect their own health and safety.

Pupil Services — programs and services provided through the disciplines of school psychology, school social work, school counseling, and school nursing that enhances student health and safety.

Programs for Students — voluntary participation in extracurricular activities that provide opportunities for socialization, skill development and leadership within student participants, while creating an ethic in opposition to risky behaviors.

Programs for Adults — professional development and support services for school staff that assist them in being healthy role models and mentors for students they work with, as well as information and skills for parents that better enable them to guide their children toward health and wellness.

Family and Community Connections — partnerships between schools, the community and students' homes that provide a seamless web of care and support.

The DPI's Student Services, Prevention and Wellness Team provides the following services to support healthy student development:

Grants to Local School Districts — financial assistance through federal formula grants or state appropriated competitive grants that allow schools to implement components of a comprehensive school health program.

Technical Assistance — guidance and support from consultants in pupil service disciplines and risk behavior program areas via telephone, mail, and electronic mail.

Information Resources — print and electronic resources to support local program development, implementation, and assessment.

Professional Development — annual statewide conferences, regional workshops, and trainings are conducted on relevant issues related to the disciplines and programs within the SSPW Team.